DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 352 907 HE 026 107

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TITLE Institutional Market Places and Faculty Attrition: The Realities for Professors at One Research University. ASHE Annual Meeting Paper.
PUB DATE Oct 92
NOTE 19p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (Minneapolis, MN, October 28-November 1, 1992).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Rank (Professional); *College Faculty; Faculty College Relationship; *Faculty Mobility; Higher Education; Longitudinal Studies; Nontenured Faculty; Research Universities; Salaries; School Holding Power; Sex Differences; *Teacher Persistence; Teaching (Occupation); Tenure; Tenured Faculty
IDENTIFIERS *ASHE Annual Meeting

ABSTRACT

This study developed a descriptive profile of an institutional academic marketplace reflecting differences in mobility across rank, disciplines and gender over a 10-year period at one research university. Because the study focused on faculty attrition, data analysis examined reasons for departure by rank, gender and discipline. Data sources included a variety of institutional records including initial appointment information, annual promotion and tenure reports, and termination/resignation reports. Analysis of these data found that salary, retirement, professional advancement and institutional issues were the most frequent reasons cited overall for faculty leaving this institution. Trends according to rank showed that full professors were most likely to leave for reasons of professional advancement and difficulties with the university, while associate professors, excluding salary, were most likely to leave for issues related to the balance of teaching and research. Tenure and tenure related concerns were the reasons for departure given by the largest percentage of assistant professors as well as salary. Results also showed that women left for salary reasons but also for personal reasons and for institutional issues rather than tenure related issues. (Contains 11 references.) (JB)

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# INSTITUTIONAL MARKET PLACES AND FACULTY ATTRITION: THE REALITIES FOR PROFESSORS AT ONE RESEARCH UNIVERSITY

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Paper Prepared for Presentation at the Annual Meeting
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October, 1992

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ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

This paper was presented at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education held at the Marriott City Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota, October 29 - November 1, 1992. This paper was reviewed by ASHE and was judged to be of high quality and of interest to others concerned with the research of higher education. It has therefore been selected to be included in the ERIC collection of ASHE conference papers.

# Institutional Market Places and Faculty Attrition: The Realities for Professors at One Research University

The purpose of this study was to develop a descriptive profile of an institutional academic marketplace as part of a larger study on faculty recruitment and retention. The profile reflected differences in mobility across rank, discipline and gender over a ten-year period at one research university. This paper deals specifically with issues related to faculty attrition. The data findings, however, have generalizable messages for institutional policy makers.

## PERSPECTIVES

To say that faculty are a national resource imperiled (Bowen and Schuster, 1987) is one thing; to raise an institution's awareness that its faculty may be at risk is quite another. In the last decade, studies have slowly begun to document a changing set of realities for faculty yet the related changes in institutional policies and practices have been even slower to take hold. We know we will, at some point, experience faculty retirements and potential shortages. We know less about how to retain those faculty we presently have and successfully recruit new persons into academic ranks. It is the identification of these realities, policies and practices which is the focus of this study especially as related to faculty retention, with particular attention paid to issues related to assistant professors.

The rising costs of recruitment, coupled with the increased dollar commitment associated with a positive tenure decision, has magnified the institutional impact and implications of each hiring decision (Hansen, 1985; Dooris and Lozier, 1988; Schuster, 1990). Yet we have also found that the selection process is not necessarily a good predictor of long-term job success (Burke, 1987). What happens to assistant and associate faculty during their movement through probationary period and rank that impedes or facilitates progress? Do associate professors continue to see careers tied to single institutions or once awarded tenure, do they pursue advancement in other institutional settings? If assistant professors leave the institution prior to their tenure review, are there reasons given for departure? Can the reasons be analyzed in any meaningful way and do academic decision makers have access to this information? Are the circumstances of departure specific only to the individual or are there institutional and/or cultural barriers which need to be addressed? The answers to such questions become even more important as universities look to retain women and minority faculty.

Recent studies have provided some baseline contexts for consideration of these issues. For example, in the reasons for departure given by assistant professors in arts and sciences, other than denial of tenure, Burke (1987) found that money was not usually as important as "quality of life" issues. Intellectual isolation, intellectual incompatibility with senior colleagues and spousal employment, or lack thereof, were predominate factors. Matier's research revealed similar findings across ranks (1990). He notes that 6 of 7 primary reasons for faculty leaving research universities were what he called "intangibles" - congeniality of associates, rapport with departmental leadership, research opportunities, and reputation of department, institution and associates. Although the question was posed as one of satisfaction, the recent study of National Post-secondary Faculty (NCES, 1990) showed similar findings for untenured faculty at public research institutions with the exception that only 56% of the faculty in the study were satisfied with their salary. With these perspectives as a basis for comparison, this study attempted to develop an institutional profile of faculty departure.

**METHOD and DATA SOURCE**

Because data on faculty were not uniformly collected at this public research university, the first step in this process was the generation of a useful data base built from a myriad collection of institutional records. Documentation from a ten year period (1978-1988) was gathered and compiled to form an initial faculty cumulative profile allowing the generation of the following descriptive data: number of faculty appointed each year (including credit given for past experience, acting status, change in appointment status), tenure ratios by gender, race/ethnicity and discipline, promotion ratios by gender, race/ethnicity and discipline, time in rank by gender, race/ethnicity and discipline, and reasons for departure by rank, gender, race/ethnicity and discipline. The primary focus of this paper is on faculty attrition during this ten-year period so that analyses related to reasons for departure by rank, gender and discipline form the basis of the paper.

The data sources for the study were a variety of institutional records kept by the Office of Academic Affairs and the Office of Institutional Research and Planning at one research university. Initial appointment information, annual promotion and tenure reports, and termination/resignation reports served as the primary data sources. With the use of these data come the limitations of secondary data in that institutional records were not entirely complete, including designations of gender and race/ethnicity, and were presumably collected for certain institutional analyses that may not fully correspond with this study. There was also no opportunity to follow-up with faculty, either for clarification of responses or expansion of comments. The total number of faculty

represented in the attrition study was 483, or an approximate yearly attrition rate of 4.8%. When those who had retired or who were deceased were removed from the population, the total became 330 (or 3.3% yearly rate). Retirement and death accounted for 1.5% of the overall annual attrition rate. There were also 13 acting assistant professors, 2 instructors, and 1 adjunct professor (counted by Academic Affairs as a faculty member) who left the institution during this period. The latter three faculty were disregarded from the analyses because they were not uniformally counted across the various data sources. The acting assistant professors were also not included in the analyses because, with one exception, they all left the institution due to non-reappointment either of their yearly contract or at tenure decision points. Therefore, in most of the analyses the study reflects 467 faculty who left the institution.

It should be noted for the purposes of this paper that there was some difficulty with accessing the faculty profile data base. As a result, the data presented here are limited to frequencies and percentage descriptions of faculty attrition, based on researcher-generated data. These data are the original sources used in the generation of the institutional data base but their format (lists, exit surveys, etc.) precluded more sophisticated data analyses. More complete descriptive and inferential statistical analyses are forthcoming as are reports related to race/ethnicity.

## FINDINGS

### Institutional Attrition Trends

The institutional profile of reasons for faculty departure provided some important findings, several of which are highlighted here. Across the institution during the ten-year period of 1978-1988, 467 faculty left this research university. The primary reason for leaving was increase in salary, a response given by 31% of the faculty (see Table 1a). Retirement was the second most frequent reason for leaving (23%), and professional advancement was the third reason most cited (20%). Professional advancement included promotion in rank and advancement to administrative positions such as deans, vice presidents or presidents. Responses also included promotion in both academic and private sector organizations.

In descending order of importance, other reasons given for leaving the institution included: institutional issues (16%); movement to the private sector (13%); tenure denial and tenure-related concerns (13%); personal reasons (11%); death (6%); dual career couple issues (5%); and geography (5%). Retirement and death combined to account for 29% of those leaving the institution during this ten-year period. As this research was undertaken to inform institutional policies and practice, retirement and death were

removed from the equations following the first analysis. The institution had not initiated formal early retirement programs until the end of the study period, so it is assumed that these retirement decisions were made in the normal course of a faculty member's career and not as a result of any specific initiative, program, or institutional concern and therefore will not be dealt with in greater detail in this paper. Similarly, death of a faculty member, while tragic, is beyond the scope of policies and procedures to prevent. The initial inclusion of faculty who retired or were deceased provided useful demographic information related to faculty attrition, however. Both factors primarily affected full professors, retirement to a significant degree. Originally, it was thought that removing geography from further analyses would also be warranted, as the institution again has no control over where it is located. However, as a factor in faculty attrition, it seemed useful to note if geography played a greater role in decisions to leave among certain groups of faculty, thereby perhaps indicating some need for better or different approaches to recruitment.

The institutional profile provided some basic information about why faculty left this university. In most instances, senior administrators and policy makers would not be surprised to learn that salaries and professional advancement/promotion opportunities can lure faculty away from state universities, especially during a decade of slow growth in salaries (*Academe*, 1990). What came as a surprise, and therefore warranted further investigation, were the numbers of faculty who left for what was called "institutional issues." Within this category fell responses such as concern with the balance between teaching and research, lack of support for programs (attitudinally and financially), disenchantment with institutional and/or departmental policies, concerns about departmental interpersonal relations, lack of intellectual stimulation and ability to find research collaboration opportunities, etc. When retirement and death are removed from the analysis, institutional issues becomes the third most frequently cited reason for leaving among all faculty at this university (see Tables 2a and 2b). This factor will be explored in greater detail later in this paper.

**Attrition Trends by Rank**

Baldwin (1981, 1990), Blackburn (1985) and others suggest that issues for faculty vary across careers. To see if this trend persisted at this public research university, reasons for leaving the university were analyzed by rank (see Tables 2a and 2b). As anticipated, the research showed that attrition factors varied by rank, corroborating earlier studies at other institutions.

Salary. Across rank, the primary reason for leaving was salary (see Table 2a), with the exception of tenure for junior faculty. The strength of salary as a reason for leaving varied across rank, however. Of all those leaving the institution, assistant professors gave salary as a reason most often (38%), followed by full professors (33%) and associate professors (29%). When examined within rank (see Table 2b), salary was a more important reason for leaving among full professors (54%) than for either associate (51%) or assistant professors (33%).

Professional Advancement. Professional advancement was the second most important reason for leaving across rank (see Table 2a), and the potentially equal importance attributed to advancement and salary should be noted as one examines the data. Not every faculty member who gave salary as a reason for leaving also cited professional advancement, or vice versa, however, so that in terms of this study, the correlation between these two factors was not 100%.

Full professors most often reported leaving the institution for reasons of professional advancement. This would not be surprising, given the nature of opportunities provided to full professors based on prestige, experience, and future career goals. Salary and professional advancement accounted for almost 61% of the reasons given by full professors leaving the institution excluding retirement and death. Among associate professors, who would be considered equally subject to attractive offers from outside the institution, professional advancement was a much less important reason for leaving than for full professors. It is interesting to note, however, that in leaving for advancement purposes, associate professors were more likely to go to the private sector than full professors. The same trend existed for assistant professors.

Institutional Issues. Again, one of the most interesting findings in this study was the percentage of faculty who left the institution for issues related to professional climate and other aspects of the university itself - a category labeled "institutional issues." Although not as strong a factor in decisions to leave as professional advancement and salary, institutional issues accounted for 22% of the reasons given for leaving, overall (see Table 2a). Assistant and associate professors gave the reason most often. Assistant professors were especially disenchanted with institutional policies and practices, and with the lack of colleagueship within their departmental units. They were also equally concerned with the balance between teaching and research and with research issues, such as research support, research collaboration, and/or the opportunity to pursue research interests. These concerns may be reflective of institutional fit or frustration normally be attributed to the probationary period. Evenso, the category was the fourth strongest indicator of reasons for leaving given by assistant professors (see Table 2b), and could

suggest a need to look more closely at hiring practices and socialization/support issues of new faculty. This would be especially relevant in that an almost equal number of assistant professors went on to other academic institutions as went into the private sector, suggesting institutional fit to be as great a contributor to the decision to leave as choice of career.

Institutional issues were also important reasons for leaving given by associate professors, accounting for the second highest number of responses (see Table 2b). Policy planners and decision makers may expect a certain degree of attrition among newly promoted faculty who have greater mobility as a result of being granted tenure. They may not forecast an out-migration of these same faculty as a consequence of discouragement with institutional policies and practices. Among the associate faculty leaving this research university, concerns were most often noted about issues of research (research opportunities, support, collaboration, etc.), and the balance between teaching and research. Institutional resources and dissatisfaction with specific departmental or university policies were also noted but less frequently than among assistant professors. One could posit that associate faculty with long careers ahead of them are not as invested or ingrained in one academic setting as full professors and therefore may choose both to move because of institutional concerns and to be willing to articulate these concerns. The timing of these moves, and their proximity to tenure and promotion decisions might warrant closer examination if quality associate faculty leave in greater proportion than they stay.

Among full professors, institutional issues were the third most frequently cited reason for leaving, although a less important factor than for their associate ranked colleagues and a more important consideration than for assistant professors. Within the attrition category, there was an increase in dissatisfaction with specific institutional or departmental policies and interpersonal relations among departmental colleagues. Research issues remained a concern and the balance between teaching and research continued as a factor, although less of one than among those still adhering to institutional promotion and tenure policies.

Dual Careers The issue of dual careers has only begun to be addressed at this university. Many of the faculty and staff are married to or partners of other university employees; closer examination reveals traditional hiring patterns, with the man hired into the institution first and the woman following, usually into a staff or clerical position. [There was no way to verify gay and/or lesbian couples through institutional data records, although several gay, lesbian, and/or bisexual faculty have left the institution during the time period of this study.] In the last ten years or more, a greater percentage of persons

have been hired into the university with minimal employment support or assistance given to the professional spouse/partner. It might be anticipated that assistant professors would face the dual career dilemma early and, if unresolved, choose to leave the institution. The data presented here supported that premise, with assistant professor giving the reason most often. What is interesting, although not illogical, is the percentage of associate faculty who also left for this reason, many of the respondents being men (see Tables 2a, 2b and 3). This may be a reflection of the spouses/partners having "waited" on their own careers until after tenure/promotion was awarded and a more profitable professional move was available to both. The close timing of many of these departures to the tenure/promotion decision suggests a need for closer examination of this trend.

**Attrition Trends by Gender**

In addition to rank, the reasons given for faculty leaving this research university varied by gender (see Table 3).

Salary. Male faculty identified salary as a primary, if not sole, reason for leaving more often than women; it was also of greater importance as a reason for leaving among men than among women (49% of total male responses compared to 27% of total female responses). The one exception to this trend was among full professors, where salary represented a slightly greater reason for leaving among women faculty than among men. [The small number of women full professors could effect the actual importance of this finding. As it was not possible to do inferential statistics for this paper, the statistical significance is not known.] Another difference illuminated by the data was that salary was always the most important reason given for male faculty leaving, equal in importance only with tenure among junior professors. In the early career stages of assistant and associate professors, salary played a very important role in why male faculty left the institution (almost 2:1 over any other reason given). The importance was greatest at the associate rank, diminishing only slightly for full professors. Among female faculty, salary was often a consideration but only the most frequent reason given among full professors. In fact, salary became much less important as a reason for leaving among associate women faculty, totally apart from the importance given salary by their male colleagues at this same rank.

Professional Advancement. After salary, male faculty left for reasons of professional advancement, often to move to private sector positions that were associated with promotion. The connection between professional advancement and salary has already been noted but it is interesting to add that men more frequently cited salary first, followed by professional advancement if both reasons were given for leaving the

university while women gave the reasons in the reverse order. For both men and women, professional advancement opportunities provided greater reason for leaving the university as faculty moved through the ranks. This was not surprising given the external labor market opportunities that afford themselves to those of greater academic stature and status (Burke, 1987; Youn, 1988). On the other hand, it would be useful to note the timing of these leaving decisions to internal labor market factors such as promotion decisions, availability of sabbatical leaves, interuniversity fellowships, etc. It would also be informative to examine more carefully the nature of these advancement opportunities - are they promotions in rank, promotions to administrative positions, changes in career paths, etc. Senior administrators have to expect a degree of attrition among more senior faculty but in order to appropriately respond to the attrition of valued professors, it is necessary to understand the motivation behind the move and whether there are institutional opportunities available that could equally satisfy faculty needs.

The importance of understanding the nature of professional advancement opportunities is increased when one also looks at the percent of faculty who leave to move to the private sector. For a public institution, there is always competition with private sector business and industry when it comes to salaries, research support, and certain professional quality of life measures. Yet only a fraction of those associate or full professors who left the institution said that they did so for professional advancement opportunities in the private sector (less than 20% in any rank or gender combination). More often, faculty left either for private sector and the resultant salary increase (more true for men than women), or for professional advancement opportunities at other academic institutions (equally true for men and women).

Institutional Issues. The importance of institutional issues as a reason for leaving among men and women follows a similar pattern to its importance across rank. While a greater factor for men overall than for women, institutional issues were most important reasons for leaving among associate professors, both men and women. This category was the most frequently cited reason for leaving among associate women faculty (32%), of equal importance to personal reasons. Within this attrition category, women associate professors were similarly concerned with departmental/university support for their research interests (support defined as other than financial), with the balance between teaching and research, and a dissatisfaction with interpersonal relationships among colleagues. Male associate professors had concerns primarily about pursuing their research interests and support for these efforts (both financial and attitudinal). To a lesser extent, male associate professors took issue with the balance between teaching and research and with various departmental/institutional policies and practices.

Personal Issues. Although not well defined through institutional records, personal issues take on new importance in faculty attrition when reasons for leaving were analyzed by gender. Personal issues were the second most important reason cited by women for leaving the university, regardless of rank, equal in importance with professional advancement opportunities (in all ranks, the reason was of similar value with another response, yet still was an important factor). For men, personal reasons varied in importance as a reason for leaving, but were listed below every other response category except dual career issues. The only variation in this pattern was among full professors where personal issues were mentioned slightly more often than movement to the private sector as well. Again, little is known about the meaning of this attrition category for women or for men, although some faculty listed family concerns in this category. It is possible that faculty gave this response in order not to have to elaborate on their reasons for leaving the university. Evenso, the frequency with which this reason was given suggests the need for further exploration if only to confirm that the response serves as a "catch-all" or non-response category.

**Attrition Trends by School**

A final analysis was conducted of faculty attrition by major academic unit to see if trends varied across the professional schools and the main undergraduate college (see Tables 4a and 4b). Again, this descriptive analysis suggested some interesting trends that often did not reflect conventional wisdom about why faculty leave a university. Unfortunately, especially when retirement and death were removed from the analysis, the number of faculty who left the university during the ten-year time period of this study became so small within some schools that careful interpretation was warranted.

Salary. Salary was a primary reason given for leaving the university by faculty in several of the professional schools, most notably Business (58%), the Medical Center (36%), Law (33%), Education (33%) and Engineering (33%) (see Table 4a). When retirement and death were removed from the analysis, salary became a far more important factor for faculty in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences as well (43.5%) (see Table 4b). Education seemed the unusual school to have such a high attrition rate due to salary (46% without retirement and death - see Table 4b), especially coupled with the small number of faculty indicating movement to the private sector (9%). At this institution, as with many comparable universities, Education and Fine Arts have historically been the schools with the lowest average faculty salaries so out-migration in itself may not be overly surprising. Yet to find that Education faculty were securing positions in academe that more adequately met their salary needs should concern administrators at this

institution. A closer examination of which ranks were leaving and to what kinds of positions within academe seems in order.

Professional Advancement. When looking across schools, the relationship between salary and professional advancement did not seem as clear as anticipated (see Table 4b). In some cases, in schools where faculty gave salary as an important reason for leaving, they also cited professional advancement. For instance, this was true in the Medical Center (44%) and the Law School (30%). In other cases, professional advancement far surpassed the emphasis placed on salary as a reason for leaving as for the faculty in Pharmacy (55.5%) and Journalism (47%).

Institutional Issues. Institutional issues played an important role in the reasons given by faculty for leaving the institution when analyses were done by rank and gender. When analyzed by school, institutional issues remained the third most important reason given for faculty attrition. Yet from Table 4b, it was clear that these concerns did not emerge equally across schools. This issue was the most frequently cited attrition factor for faculty at the Medical Center (67%) and the second most important factor for Engineering faculty (33%). Closer examination revealed a mix of concerns related to institutional polices/practices and support for research (usually meaning financial support). For faculty in the Business School and the College, institutional issues were also important factors in the decision to leave, ranking second (24%) and third (26%), respectively. A wider range of concerns were expressed by faculty in these two schools, however, including the balance of teaching and research and attitudinal support for research, as well as those concerns shared with faculty in Engineering and at the Medical Center. It would be useful to examine the relationship between rank and reason within these schools, provided the cell size would be large enough to be meaningful, so that deans would be more aware of the issues facing them within their own decision making arena. For example, the conventional wisdom within the School of Business at this institution was that faculty could not be retained primarily because of attractive salaries offered by the private sector. These data suggest that other factors may come into consideration for Business faculty leaving the university.

Private Sector. Overall, movement to the private sector was the fourth most frequent reason mentioned for faculty leaving the public university across schools and for a variety of reasons, this was not a surprise. Several schools that seemed to defy conventional wisdom. For instance, movement to the private sector was more frequent among faculty in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences than expected (21%). Conversely, fewer faculty in Business (14%), the Medical Center (11%), and Pharmacy (11%) mentioned movement to the private sector as a reason for leaving. Given the status

of public institutional funding for research in these areas and the competition for increased salaries with private business, industry and research units, these low numbers were surprising.

Tenure. One brief point about tenure needs to be made. Although the numbers of persons affected by tenure decisions were small in many of the schools, a careful examination of this factor could prove institutionally valuable. For example, in Education, much of the turnover among assistant professors (and almost all of the turnover among acting assistant professors) occurred in one department within the school. In Business, where myth was that acting assistants and assistant professors did not stay long enough to be tenured, the data showed that those who left remained in academe as often as they went to private sector positions. It could prove useful and interesting to more closely examine the recruitment and retention practices of units that seem to have regular attrition at the lower ranks in order to be sure that university dollars are not being wasted in continual (and institutionally unsuccessful) search processes.

## SUMMARY FINDINGS and CONCLUSION

### Summary

In summary, salary, retirement, professional advancement and institutional issues were the most frequent reasons cited overall for faculty leaving this public research university. The importance of salary as a reason for leaving reinforces the NCES national study findings (1990). When compared to all faculty who had left the institution during the ten-year period, the data showed somewhat different trends across rank. Of faculty across all ranks, full professors were most likely to leave for reasons of professional advancement and difficulties with the university (professional quality of life issues) such as conflict with senior administrators and institutional policies/practices, apart from salary. Excluding salary, associate professors were most likely to leave the institution for issues related to the balance of teaching and research, and resource-related issues. Professors at the associate rank accounted for over 1/3 of all faculty leaving for these institutional issues. Of interest, this group was the least likely to leave for salary reasons, although it was still an important consideration. Assistant professors accounted for almost one-half of all faculty who left the institution for reasons related to dual career couples and only a slightly lower percent of those who left to take a position in a field outside of higher education.

Within rank analyses shed new light on institutional myths of faculty life. As in Burke's 1987 study, tenure and tenure related concerns was the reason for departure given by the largest percentage of assistant professors at this research university, but salary was

the next most frequent reason given. Private sector advancement opportunities was third and in most cases, this involved a substantial increase in salary at another institution. Professional quality of life issues (institutional issues) and spousal employment opportunities individually accounted for less than 20% of the reasons for departure, but together, they accounted for almost 1/4 of the variance, making this combined factor the third most important reason for departure. Professional quality of life issues identified by assistant professors included such things as disenchantment with academic and institutional life, quality of colleagues, philosophical differences, lack of resources, and balance between teaching and research. Professional quality of life and spousal employment were combined here in this discussion first, because they are in part related to issues of "fit" often explored in candidate interviews, and second, because they are in large part within the institution's purview to change or to be of assistance with the junior professor.

Within rank analyses also showed the impact of various institutional issues on associate and full professors' decisions to leave the university, in part supporting Matier's 1990 study of two research universities. As the second and third most frequently cited reason given, respectively, institutional decision makers may want to look more closely at policies and practices within various units on campus as they affect faculty at these ranks. Although this group represented the smallest number of faculty in the study, little is known about associate rank faculty at this university. Given the findings presented in this study, more careful scrutiny of this group could be in order especially if leaving decisions are made in close proximity to promotion/tenure decisions. The cost to the university in lost investment in and lost resources of newly promoted associate faculty may be an important factor in times of more restricted finances. Depending on out-migration from the university by full professors, lack of ability to retain quality associate rank faculty becomes even more of an issue.

The study also showed that men and women left the institution for somewhat different reasons. Following salary, male faculty left for reasons of professional advancement, often to move to private sector positions associated with advancement and increased salaries. Institutional issues were the third most important reason cited for men to leave the university, even more important than tenure and tenure related decisions. For women, the reasons for leaving beyond salary were quite different. Not far behind salary, personal reasons and professional advancement issues were listed equally as often; among women associate faculty, institutional issues was the most important reason for leaving, even of greater importance than salary. As with their male counterparts, these reasons were far more frequently cited by women than tenure and tenure related decisions as

reasons for leaving. Salaries have often been considered central to negotiations to retain faculty. The gender differences in reasons for leaving as they existed at this institution would suggest that salary adjustment alone may not be sufficient to retain faculty.

Similarly, differences existed in the reasons faculty left the university when analyzed by school. Salary remains an important consideration, but not always the most important issue. The data support local contentions that certain groups of faculty are more likely to leave the institution for professional advancement opportunities and the private sector than others; yet, the data also provide insight to counter specific myths about mobility such as the infrequency with which faculty from medical fields and Pharmacy move from this institution to private sector employment opportunities. Institutional issues seem to impact academic units differently, in some playing an important role in the decision to leave. Replacing faculty who have left for such reasons may not be difficult in schools such as Education but may present a challenge in fields such as Engineering and Business. Equally difficult, but for other reasons, may be the ability to replace and retain faculty in the traditional Humanities fields found in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Given the potential shortages of faculty in these disciplines (Schuster, 1990), university administrators may want to be more aware of the impact of professional quality of life concerns on this group of faculty, especially if those being lost are considered among the most valued.

**Conclusion**

This study was important for several reasons. The first was that it resulted in the development of an institutional faculty profile from which pertinent trends and information could be drawn, monitored, and updated. While certainly a self-serving outcome, conducting the study illuminated how little coherent information was gathered related to faculty attrition and institutional careers in general. Although pieces of information had been regularly collected, they had never been collapsed into a central data base for report construction, policy review, or proactive practice. In the early stages of this project, correspondence with other comparable institutions indicated that few research universities actually collected comprehensive exit data or had developed similar data bases for policy development. With the development of a useful data base, it would be possible to track faculty institutional careers, noting on an individual, departmental and school level the ways in which various factors impact the success and satisfaction of faculty. Such a data base would also allow for comparisons between those who leave the institution and those who stay. For instance, one piece of information lacking from this study is a comparable identification of those faculty (by rank, gender, and school) who

came into the institution during this time period and/or as replacements for those who left. While a preliminary profile of faculty hires has been established, noting tenure and retention rates by rank and gender, it was less possible to connect these data trends with those used in the attrition study since the data files had yet to be merged at the writing of this paper.

For faculty across rank and gender (presumably across ethnicity as the data unfold), lessons about attrition and retention were learned. In addition to the specific reasons for leaving and their variation, the study showed that the traditional institutional response in counter-offers of increased salary may not be sufficient justification for a faculty member to stay, particularly women. The study indicated some factors associated with leaving that may be outside the realm of institutional control. For instance, salaries are not totally within the domain of public institutional policy makers to ameliorate, yet the documentation might be used as leverage with legislators in the future. Many other issues that were identified as reasons for leaving, especially issues associated with professional climate, can well be addressed by faculty and academic administrators. For this specific research university, organizational myths abounded that were seriously challenged as a result of the data from this study. Yet similar research universities have held on to long-standing perceptions of a content faculty and have not been fully willing to recognize the erosion of professional climate on their own campuses. It also seems possible, given the differences that appeared when looking across rank, to develop a faculty career stages profile identifying issues which accumulate, dissipate and remain constant over the career of faculty at research universities similar to work previously done in liberal arts institutions. The career stages profile may provide a more operationalized foundation for policy analysis and formulation (e.g., Baldwin, 1981, 1990; Blackburn, 1985).

The study also provided important insights into emerging trends that may become more important issues for faculty in the future. One example has to do with the reasons why assistant professors at this university resign from their positions. The percent of faculty leaving as a result of tenure related reasons (especially those not staying for formal review) was higher than expected. Therefore, as part of the on-going study of recruitment and retention, it will now be important to look more closely at the tenure process including the mid-probationary review and the level where a negative decision is made, to try to assess if there are institutional and/or cultural inhibitors to the success of junior faculty. Spousal/partner employment, while not a new phenomenon, is an issue of growing importance and certainly affected a much higher percentage of faculty across

rank than was anticipated. Institutional practices related to employment assistance may need to be reviewed.

It is clear from this data that the "one size fits all" approach to personnel policies may not be as effective as it was in previous decades. Issues vary by rank, by gender, and by school, making university level policies almost inapplicable from the start. Conversely, the range of variation across this university suggests that effective policy making may be largely relegated to the individual level - negotiated between a faculty member and his/her department chair or dean. Neither of these options seems most judicious, although both are in effect at this university as at many of its counterparts. What may be warranted are institutional guidelines that allow for negotiation at the unit level so that certain idiosyncrasies of internal and external labor markets may be more fully addressed. Again, this may not be a grand revelation at many research universities and, in fact, some within this particular institution would nod in agreement that such practices exist. But many decision makers, faculty and deans would argue that flexibility is lacking in an organization where many policy decisions and most resources remain highly centralized.

In the end, it is true that creating new and proactive institutional personnel polices to more fully support faculty lives may be time consuming, politically tenuous in an era of growing external accountability, and at some point, costly. The other side of the argument at this research university, and others like it, is that the cost of regular turnover for institutionally manageable concerns, especially in the junior and mid-career ranks, can be a far more expensive practice.

* The author would like to thank Richard McKinney, Director - Office of the Budget, and the Office of Institutional Research and Planning for their assistance in the preparation of this paper.

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